

**In the Abstract:**

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

~~One embodiment of the disclosures made herein is a method for facilitating protection switching via failure prediction techniques. In accordance with such a method at least one~~  
embodiment of the disclosures made herein, an operation for monitoring a failure prediction parameter  
of at least one of the plurality of protected system elements is performed. During monitoring, an  
operation is performed for correlating a present state of the failure prediction parameter to a failure  
prediction criterion for determining whether one of the protected system elements has been met a  
failure prediction condition is performed, thus identifying a failure predicted one of a plurality of  
protected system elements when ~~the~~ a failure prediction condition is met. ~~An operation is performed~~  
~~for determining whether a protection switching priority among a collection of failure predicted system~~  
~~elements applies to the failure predicted one of the protected system elements. In response to~~  
determining protection switching priority as applying to the failure predicted one ~~of the protected~~  
~~system elements or the failure predicted one being the only failure predicted system element, an~~  
~~operation is performed for downloading service information of the failure predicted one of the~~  
~~protected system elements to the protection system element is performed. An operation is next~~  
~~performed for confirming failure~~ Failure of the failure predicted one ~~of the protected system elements~~  
is confirmed. Then, ~~an operation is performed for switching~~ Switching communication service  
supported by the failure predicted one of the protected system elements for being supported by to the  
protection system element is performed.